



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®
Walla Walla District

MILL CREEK FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT GENERAL INVESTIGATION

Draft Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment Report

January 2020

APPENDIX G
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Walla Walla District

Mill Creek General Investigation Study Walla Walla, Washington

Scoping Summary Report



November 2018

Introduction

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District (Corps), and Walla Walla County are partnering on a General Investigation (GI) study on the Mill Creek Flood Control Project (Project) to address the overall flood risks Mill Creek presents to the Walla Walla, Washington community. The study will consider the Project's capacity, performance, and reliability of several components through a range of alternatives that could be implemented to efficiently and effectively reduce risks to the community looking forward. Alternative solutions could include a rehabilitated channel or a new bypass channel to reduce risk of flood and infrastructure collapse within the population and commercial core of Walla Walla. The study will seek to develop environmentally compatible solutions for flood risk management, while minimizing socioeconomic effects and impacts to Threatened and Endangered species.

Corps of Engineers Internal Workshop

A group of Corps and Walla Walla County employees met Oct. 1-5 at the Walla Walla District's Annex building near the regional airport.

The objectives of the internal workshop included:

- Schedule, Budget, Communication Strategies
- Document Development and Editing Procedures
- Risk Register and Decision Log/Decision making
- Identify problems, opportunities, objectives, and constraints

Meeting Attendance

Corps and Walla Walla County staff in attendance included:

Bret Walters, Chief of Planning, Corps Walla Walla District
Alex Colter, Project Manager, Corps Walla Walla District
Jodie Foster, Plan Formulator, Corps Galveston District
Jerry Fuentes, Planner, Corps Sacramento District
Drew Minert, Economist, Corps Kansas City District
Justin Stegall, Operation Project Manager, Corps Walla Walla District
Mike Erickson, Chief, Environmental Compliance, Corps Walla Walla District
Sean Redar, GIS, Corps Walla Walla District
Felicia August, Technical Writer, Corps Walla Walla District
Jeff Bonafilia, Project Assistant, Corps Walla Walla District
Brad Trumbo, Biologist, Corps Walla Walla District
Anneli Colter, Environmental Coordinator, Corps Walla Walla District
Jarrett Schuster, Environmental Resource Specialist, Corps Walla Walla District
Tracy Schwarz, Hydrologist, Corps Walla Walla District

Steve Wyrembelski, Geotechnical Engineer, Corps Walla Walla District
Gina Baltrusch, Public Affairs Specialist, Corps Walla Walla District
Michaela Murdock, Attorney, Corps Walla Walla District
Jeremy Weber, Planner, Corps Northwestern Division
Brad Bird, Engineer, Corps Northwestern Division
Tony Garcia, Public Works Director, Walla Walla County
Joy Bader, Tech IV, Walla Walla County

Meeting Format

The purpose of this meeting was to work through one cycle of the Corps planning iterative process using only knowledge available in the room. The planning process began with specifying problems and opportunities and then brainstorming possible alternatives to address problems and then identifying screening and decision criteria for alternatives, key assumptions, and known risks and uncertainty.

Agency Charrette

The Corps hosted staff from Federal, State, Tribal and local agencies for a public charrette on Oct. 18 from 0800-1700.

The objectives of the open house included:

- Provide information about the GI study scope, process, and timeline.
- Provide information about flood risk and flood risk management.
- Request feedback on several preliminary conceptual alternatives.
- Request other solutions and alternatives that should be considered.

Meeting Attendance

Corps and Walla Walla County staff in attendance included:
Bret Walters, Chief of Planning, Corps Walla Walla District
Alex Colter, Project Manager, Corps Walla Walla District
Jeff Bonafilia, Project Assistant, Corps Walla Walla District
Brad Trumbo, Biologist, Corps Walla Walla District
Anneli Colter, Environmental Coordinator, Corps Walla Walla District
Justin Stegall, Operation Project Manager, Corps Walla Walla District
Gina Baltrusch, Public Affairs Specialist, Corps Walla Walla District
Michaela Murdock, Attorney, Corps Walla Walla District
Jeremy Weber, Planner, Corps Northwestern Division
Brad Bird, Engineer, Corps Northwestern Division
Scott Hall, Chief, Cultural Resources, Corps Walla Walla District
Jeremy Nguyen, Natural Resource Specialist, Corps Walla Walla District
Joy Bader, Tech IV, Walla Walla County

Tom Glover, Community Development Department director, Walla Walla County

A total of 27 people attended the charrette, based upon individuals signing the attendance sheet. (Note: Not all meeting participants signed the attendance sheet). Table 1 identifies the interest groups represented at the meetings.

Table 1. Group Representation at the Charrette

Group	Represented
Federal agencies	US Geological Survey U.S. Forest Service
State agencies	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Washington Department of Ecology
Local governments	Walla Walla County City of Walla Walla Port of Walla Walla
Tribal Governments	Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Non-governmental organizations	Walla Walla Downtown Foundation Tri-State Steelheaders Blue Mountain Audubon Society Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Snake River Salmon Recovery Board Walla Walla County Conservation District
Other	Private Citizens

Comments

A total of 25 comments were received by the Corps. Written comments were submitted during the charrette, and later received through the U.S. Postal Service, electronic mail (NEPANWW@usace.army.mil), and the web site (www.nww.usace.army.mil). All comments received were reviewed and processed.

Comments were separated into six general themes. These themes are listed below:

Fish Passage: Comments that fall under this theme are address improving fish passage by modifying structures, flows, or both.

Natural Design: Comments that fall under this theme address incorporating a more natural riparian vegetation, floodplain function, and hydrologic flows.

Locally Preferred Plan: Comments that fall under this theme address funding and feasibility of a locally preferred plan.

Water Rights: Comments under this theme address that fact that there are existing water rights downstream of the current flood risk management project.

Alternatives: Comments under this theme provide input on the five possible alternatives presented, or the comments suggest other alternatives to consider. Comments under this theme could also be general questions about alternatives and their affects.

Environmental Considerations: Comments under this theme address the environmental considerations of water quality, flow, and affects to ESA listed fish.

Public Scoping Open House

On Thursday, November 1, 2018, the Corps and Walla Walla County conducted a public scoping open house to provide an overview of the GI study and solicit comments from interested parties regarding the scope of the study and alternatives to be addressed. Letters announcing the open house were distributed to approximately 150 agencies, organizations, local governments, and individuals on the study mailing list.

The objectives of the open house included:

- Provide information about the GI study scope, process, and timeline.
- Provide information about flood risk and flood risk management.
- Request feedback on several preliminary conceptual alternatives.
- Request other solutions and alternatives that should be considered.

Meeting Attendance

Corps and Walla Walla County staff in attendance included:

Bret Walters, Chief of Planning, Corps Walla Walla District
Alex Colter, Project Manager, Corps Walla Walla District
Justin Stegall, Operation Project Manager, Corps Walla Walla District
Mike Erickson, Chief, Environmental Compliance, Corps Walla Walla District
Scott Hall, Chief, Cultural Resources, Corps Walla Walla District
Jeff Bonafilia, Project Assistant, Corps Walla Walla District
Brad Trumbo, Biologist, Corps Walla Walla District
Anneli Colter, Environmental Coordinator, Corps Walla Walla District
Jarrett Schuster, Environmental Resource Specialist, Corps Walla Walla District
Brandon McNeil, Engineer-in-training, Corps Walla Walla District
Jeremy Nguyen, Natural Resource Specialist, Corps Walla Walla District
Tracy Schwarz, Hydrologist, Corps Walla Walla District
Steve Wyrembelski, Geotechnical Engineer, Corps Walla Walla District
Gina Baltrusch, Public Affairs Specialist, Corps Walla Walla District
Brigida Sanchez, Public Affairs Specialist, Corps Walla Walla District
Michaela Murdock, Attorney, Corps Walla Walla District
Allison Needham, Realty Specialist, Corps Walla Walla District

Tony Garcia, Public Works Director, Walla Walla County
 Seth Walker, Engineer, Walla Walla County
 Joy Bader, Tech IV, Walla Walla County

A total of 76 people attended the public scoping open house, based upon individuals signing the attendance sheet. (Note: Not all meeting participants signed the attendance sheet). Table 2 identifies the interest groups represented at the meetings.

Table 2. Group Representation at Public Scoping Open House.

Group	Represented
Federal agencies	U.S. Geological Survey
State agencies	
Local governments	Walla Walla County City of Walla Walla Port of Walla Walla City of College Place
Tribal Government	Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Elected officials	Todd Kimball – County Commissioner Mary Campbell – Community Council
Non-governmental organizations	Blue Mountain Land Trust Freestone Environmental Sealaska Walla Walla Emergency Management Whitman College Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization
Media	Walla Walla Union Bulletin
Other	Private Citizens

Meeting Format

The first half-hour of each meeting was an open house format, during which display boards of the project area and project issues were exhibited and Corps and IDWR personnel were available to discuss the project and answer questions informally. The formal aspect of the meetings consisted of an introduction and a presentation by the Corps’ Project Manager. Following the presentation, a second open house session was held in which attendees were invited to ask questions of the project team and submit formal comments in writing.

Written Scoping Comments

Public scoping comments were requested on the Mill Creek General Investigation. The scoping period from October 15 through November 16, 2018. A total of 33 comments

were received by the Corps. Written comments were submitted during the public scoping meetings, and later received through the U.S. Postal Service, electronic mail (NEPANWW@usace.army.mil), and the web site (www.nww.usace.army.mil). All comments received were reviewed and processed.

The written comments were separated into eight general themes. These themes are listed below:

Alternatives: Comments under this theme provide input on the five possible alternatives presented, or the comments suggest other alternatives to consider. Comments under this theme could also be general questions about alternatives and their affects.

Recreation: Comments under this theme address the desires for increased recreational opportunities along Mill Creek.

Groundwater and Aquifer Recharge: Comments under this theme discuss potential impacts to groundwater or the potential to both positively or negatively affect aquifer recharge.

EPA Guidance: Provided by the EPA on topics they believe are important to consider in the NEPA analysis for this action. Topics include range of alternatives, environmental effects, tribal coordination, and monitoring and adaptive management.

Environmental Considerations: Comments under this theme address the environmental considerations of water quality, hydrology, effects to ESA-listed fish, floodplain development, and public infrastructure.

Tribal Trust Resources: Comments under this theme were provided by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and focused on improving the conditions for tribal trust resources in all usual and accustomed hunting and gathering areas.

Natural Design: Comments that fall under this theme address incorporating a more natural riparian vegetation, floodplain function, and hydrologic flows.

Daylighting the Channel through Downtown: Comments under this theme are specific to removing the top of the concrete channel section that runs through the commercial section of downtown Walla Walla.

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